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THE
DIVINE GOODNESS
AND
HUMAN GRATITUDE.

*dives auro es, sive opibus potens,
Seu Marte parva clarus adorea,
Agnosce NUMEN gratus, et huc refer
Quæcunque lætum ducis ad exitum.*

Buchanani Ver. Psalm. xxix. 1.

*The Lord shall cause thine Enemies that rise
up against thee to be smitten before thy face:
They shall come out against thee one Way, and
flee before thee seven Ways. Deut. xxviii. 7.*

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The Lord has made his power known to the
people of the world in many ways. He has
created the world and all that is in it. He
has given us life and health. He has made
the sun and the moon and the stars. He
has made the wind and the rain. He has
made the earth and the sea. He has made
all the things that we see and feel. He
has made us in his own image and
likeness. He has given us his love and
mercy. He has forgiven our sins. He has
promised us eternal life. He has made
all these things for our good and our
glory. We praise him for ever and ever.
Amen.

THE
DIVINE GOODNESS
AND
HUMAN GRATITUDE

Properly consider'd, in a

S E R M O N

Preach'd at WEST-HORSLEY in *Surry*, *November* 29, 1759, being the Day appointed for a Public Thanksgiving on Account of the late glorious Successes his Majesty's Arms have obtain'd over the *French*.

By NATHANIEL BALL, *K*
Curate of WEST-HORSLEY.

L O N D O N :

Printed for J. BUCKLAND, at the *Buck*, in
Pater-Noster-Row. MDCC LIX.

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By NATHANIEL BAILL

Curator of Westminster.

LONDON:

Printed for J. BUCKLAND, at the Bath, in
Pain-Verger-Room. MDCCLXX.

intelligible and possibly torn are



P S A L M xcvi. 8.

*Give unto the Lord the Glory
due unto his Name.*

BY the Name of God is meant
the Divine Nature, which
implies all glorious Perfection: This
shines forth with ineffable Bright-
ness through all the Works of
Creation and Providence. The
sublimeft Ideas of Wisdom, Power,
and Goodness which the highest

A 3.

In-

Intelligence can possibly form are
all involved in the Name of God.

To give the Honour due to his Name, is to entertain right Notions of God, to express by all proper Ways the highest Love and Affection to him, and to act as becomes the Relation of Creatures to an all-wise, all-powerful, all-bountiful Creator and Preserver of the World. The Glory of God manifests itself in a boundless Display of Wisdom and Power over all the Works of Nature. But his Glory chiefly arises from his Good-
ness.

ness. The Immensity, Eternity, Omnipotence, and Omniscience of God are doubtless grand Ideas, and form a noble and elevated Character: but if we could abstract these Attributes from his Goodness, we should paint to ourselves an Image of magnificent Horror; a Being that would be the Object of Dread and Aversion, instead of Love and Joy.

In my following Discourse I will endeavour,

1st. To

1st. To give a general Description of the Divine Goodness.

2dly, Consider the particular Effects of it in the remarkable Successes this Nation has obtained over our inveterate and implacable Enemies.

3dly, I will show what Obligations of Gratitude are due to God for these Successes, and what sort of Behaviour we should put on in respect to our King and Country.

1st.

ist. I will endeavour to give a general Description of the Divine Goodness.

A Being that is above all Want can have no other Design than to communicate Happiness. Universal Nature every where proclaims this joyful Truth. *The Heavens declare the Goodness, and consequently the Glory of GOD, and the Firmament sheweth his bandy Work.*

(Ps. xix. 1.) The Sun and the Moon by their suitable Figures, and regular Motions, diffuse not only Light and Splendor, but Use and

Com-

Comfort to all around them. By these we measure Time and the various Seasons, which, are the Source of innumerable Conveniencies and Pleasures. When the Spring appears, it makes the Face of Nature smile, and pours forth an infinite Variety of salu- tiferous Plants and Flowers. Summer increases the Length and Splendor of the Days, and ripens the Fruits of the Earth. Autumn yields in vast Profusion, immense stores of Corn, and other useful Productions. And even Winter affords its Pleasures, its In-door Amusements and social Gratifications,

tions, its rural Exercifes, and man-
ly Diversions. The Variety of each
Season enhances the Enjoyment of
them. And with what beautiful
and constant Regularity do they re-
turn upon us ?

Again; The Earth is made pro-
lific by the Sun's enlivening Rays
and timely Showers, which gives
Life and Joy to the vegetable
World, to Animals, and all the
Human Species. The Air, by God's
Appointment, continues to us the
Power of Respiration, and admi-
nisters various Refreshment to the

Senses. The watry Element opens its hidden Treasures for our Entertainment; and the Winds are commissioned by God to purify the Air, and waft our Ships into foreign Climates, either for Business or Delight. How can we then sufficiently admire the Goodness of God, who has made such ample Provision, not only for the Support, but the Entertainment and Pleasure of his Creatures! How highly does it become us to say with the Psalmist; *O Lord, how manifold are thy Works! In Wisdom hast thou made them all: the Earth*
is

*is full of thy Riches. — Thou openest
thine Hand, and satisfiest the Desire
of every living Thing. (Ps. civ. 24.
and Ps. cxlv. 16.)*

Such are the general Effects of
the Divine Bounty in his natural
Providence. Let us now turn our
Thoughts to the moral Providence
of God ; I mean his constant Care
and Concern for the Happiness of
his Creature, Man. With what
noble Faculties has he endowed
us above all sensitive Animals. *Thou
hast made him (says the Psalmist) a
little lower than the Angels, and hast*

B

crowned

*crowned him with Glory and Honour.
 Thou madest him to have Dominion
 over the Works of thy Hands; thou
 hast put all things under his feet: all
 Sheep and Oxen, yea, and the Beasts
 of the Fields, the Fowl of the Air,
 the Fish of the Sea, and whatsoever
 passeth through the Paths of the
 Sea.*

What infinite Variety of pleasing Ideas are we capable of giving and receiving by means of our intellectual and moral Powers? What extensive Knowledge and sublime Delights does the Mind of
 Man

Man attain by Contemplation and Study, by Reading, and generous Conversation? What home-felt Satisfaction and inward Tranquillity do we enjoy by a regular Application and due Government of our Appetites and Passions? And even when we misapply and abuse our Affections and Desires (as Human Infirmary too often does) the Goodness of God finds a Way to relieve and reclaim us. *He forgiveth our Iniquities, and healeth our Diseases. He pitieth us as a Father does his Children. For he knoweth our Frame;*

he remembereth that we are dust.
 (Pf. ciii. 3. and xxiii. 24.)

The merciful Dispensation of his Gospel gives us a sure and comfortable Hope of this Indulgence. And the Enjoyment of eternal Happiness hereafter, is over and above promised to us when the Weakness and Vanity of this Life is at an End. In all our Distresses and Troubles, both public and private, the never-failing Mercy of God is ever ready to deliver us. But this leads me to consider,

2dly.

2dly. The particular Effects of the Divine Goodness in the remarkable Successes this Nation has obtained over our inveterate and implacable Enemies.

The Providence of God has been constantly displayed in protecting this Nation against Popery and arbitrary Power; of which, many striking Instances might be produced out of the British History. But this Day's Solemnity requires our more immediate Attention to the glorious Successes we have obtained in the present War.

That ambitious Monarch the *French* King, who wants to inflave and conquer this Island, had set all his Engines at Work for this direful purpose. He had laboured with incessant Pains to ruin our Colonies abroad, to divide us at Home, to corrupt our Allies, and embroil all Europe in his unjust Quarrels. To defeat this black Design, the Goodness of God raised up a Prince in our Alliance, whose Talents of Wisdom and Fortitude are above the common Lot of Humanity. This glorious Prince, by a happy Conjunction with our own
 most

most wise, and good, and magnanimous King, has by a series of signal Victories restrained not only the Power of *France*, but *Austria*, *Russia*, and *Sweden*, upon the Continent. The brave Prince *Ferdinand*, one of his Majesty's own Generals, has obtained such a Victory at *Minden* under the Disadvantages of superior Numbers and strong Intrenchments, as plainly shows the Blessing of Heaven attended his military Atchievements. The taking of *Goree*, *Guardaloupe*, *Louisbourg*, *Quebec*, and all the principal Forts in *French Canada*,

ought to be looked upon as signal Interpositions of Divine Providence. It has pleased the great Superintendent of the World, to give Success to his Majesty's Arms in all the four Parts of this earthly Globe. So that the *French* now are reduced to the highest Distress. Their Finances are impoverished, their Trade is destroyed, their Men of War dare not face our Men of War; and the few Remains of their Merchant Vessels lie rotting in their Harbours. What endless Gratitude is therefore due to the Divine Goodness for these remarkable

able Successes! And next to God, what accumulated Praise and substantial Rewards should be paid to those heroic Officers and all the brave Seamen and Soldiers that have so intrepidly exposed their Lives for the Good of their Country. Illustrious Examples of true Patriotism! who cheerfully undergo all the Fatigues and Horrors of War to keep us safe and happy at Home.

Among the distinguished Heroes of Fame, let us pay our Tribute of Praise to thy sacred Memory, O
 Wolf!

Wolf! who didst bravely fall in the
 Field of Honor, and placidly re-
 sign thy precious Life, when thou
 heardst the Victory proclaimed
 which thy Magnanimity had shown
 the Way to. No Tears can recall
 thy Presence; but thou shalt shine
 in future History with unfading
 Lustre; and we may comfort our-
 selves under the great Loss of Thee
 with this certain Persuasion, that
 He who dy'd so nobly in the Ser-
 vice of his Country, is now enjoy-
 ing consummate Glory and Hap-
 piness in the Regions of Paradise.

Amidst

Amidst these public Congratulations, 'twould be unpardonable to omit how much the Management of our Wise and good King, and a faithful Administration, have contributed to these glorious Successes. They are to be considered under Providence as the first Instruments of Good to us, who have most judiciously plan'd what our brave Warriors have so vigorously executed.

To these signal Effects of the Divine Goodness to this Nation, I
shall

shall only add one remarkable Instance more which is obvious to all; and that is the fine Harvests and great Plenty of all Kinds of Necessaries which our Land has produced during the War. This has enabled us to support the great Expences of it, while our Enemies have been destitute of Resources to raise Money.

Having thus given you a general Description of the Divine Goodness, and consider'd the particular Effects of it in the many signal Successes we have gain'd over the Enemy,

my, I shall now briefly show, under the third Branch of this Discourse, What Obligations of gratitude are due to God for these Successes, and what sort of Behavior we should put on in respect to our King and Country.

As all Mankind live under the general Influence of Divine Providence, it behoves all to join in the general Duty of Praise and Thanksgiving: But those who receive *particular* Marks of his Favor, ought to show *particular* Thankfulness. *Let them* (says the Psalmist)

C

mist)

mitt) give Thanks, whom the Lord
hath redeem'd and delivered from the
Hand of the Enemy. (Pf. cvii. 2.)

If therefore Love naturally be-
gets Love, if Beneficence claims
any Return of Gratitude, if we
have any Honesty of Heart, or In-
genuousness of Temper, we must
own ourselves quite base and Inex-
cusable, if we neglect to pay our
highest Acknowledgments of the
Divine Goodness.

Ingratitude, even amongst Men,
is a most hateful Temper. To see
indi-

indigent Persons, after numberless Favours received, forget, nay often affront, their Benefactors, is most vile and detestable: But for Men to forget *God*, the Source of all Good, to forget *Him*, in whom they live and move, and have their Being, exceeds, by infinite Degrees all Acts of Ingratitude that one Man can commit against another. —How then can we sufficiently express the overflowing Goodness of God? We may say with the wise Son of *Sirach*, *How shall we be able to magnify Him? for he is great above all his Works.* The Lord

is terrible and very great, and marvellous is his Power. When you glorify the Lord, exalt him as much as you can; for even yet will he far exceed; and when you exalt him, put forth all your strength, and be not weary, for you can never go far enough. (Eccl. xliii. 28, 29, 30.)

We should exert all the Powers of our reasonable Nature, and express our Gratitude to God in the most reasonable Ways, *i. e.* by Prayer, by Contemplation, and above all by obeying his Laws. For (as the wise Preacher just quoted ob-

observes) *He that keepeth the Law, bringeth Offerings enow; he that taketh heed to the Commandment, offereth a Peace-Offering. He that requesteth a Good Turn, offereth fine Flour; and he that giveth Alms, sacrificeth Praise. To depart from Wickedness is a Thing pleasing to the Lord, and to forsake Unrighteousness is a Propitiation. (Eccl. xxxv. 1, 2, 3.)*

You see plainly from these Words, that Works of *Justice* and *Mercy* to our Fellow-Creatures, are the most acceptable *Praises* to God, And this indeed is agreeable to the

reason of the Thing itself. For as God is above all Want, our verbal Expressions of Praise and Thanksgiving cannot possibly do *Him* any Service. But when we imitate his Moral Character, that noble Part of it in particular, *his Benevolence to Mankind*, we then approach to the nearest Resemblance of the Divine Nature, and consequently please him most. This Consideration therefore naturally leads me to add a few Words concerning what sort of Behaviour we ought to put on in respect to our *King and Country.*

With

With regard to our *Sovereign*, we ought to pay him the most *faithful Allegiance, Honor, and dutiful Submission*. The Laws of the Land injoin this upon us, the Laws of Christianity require the same, and the Mildness and Equity of his Majesty's Government have render'd him always deserving, not only of the strictest Fidelity, but of the highest *Affection and Esteem*.

As to the Behaviour we should show to our *Country*, this consists in a chearful Obedience to the Laws, which are made for its Welfare, in
avoid-

avoiding all seditious Speeches and Practices, and in striving *to lead a quiet and peaceable Life in all Godliness and Honesty.* (1 Tim. ii. 2.)

We should in particular lay aside those narrow, selfish Notions of *Party*, which oftentimes lead us to hate and persecute those that differ from us. Every one has, doubtless, a Right to judge for himself in matters of *Politics* and *Religion*. But no one has a Right to *disturb the Peace of Society*, to sacrifice *Truth* and *Common Sense*, out of Zeal to his own Side. Much
less

less has any one a Right to throw off *Good-Nature, Moderation, and Charity.*

But the principal Duty every Subject of Great Britain is now call'd upon to observe is, *Unanimity.* We should unite all our Heads and Hearts and Hands to oppose the common Enemy. Their bad Success in the Progress of the War seems to have made them desperate. *Una salus victis nullam sperare salutem,* says the Prince of Poets. And this Despair may put them upon the most audacious Enter-

terprifes. Tho' the Wings of their Ambition have been fo closely cut, and their Power in a manner demolished abroad, they threaten us with an Invaſion at Home. In this Situation 'tis proper to remind you, that the French have their Emiſſaries in every Corner of the World, who are ſtudying to effect by Fraud and Treachery what they cannot do by open Violence. I make no doubt but the Vigilance of the Government will penetrate their dark Deſigns; and 'tis to be hoped every true Proteſtant Subject will contribute his beſt Endeavours
to

to frustrate the political Intrigues of the French, as well as their outward Arms. The Government indeed, and the Nation in general, (to their immortal Honour be it spoken) have observ'd an agreeable Harmony in carrying on the War for some time past; which has been, under Providence, a great Means of our late Successes. Let the same Harmony continue, and we need not doubt but the weak Menaces of a French Invasion will be as vain and fruitless as their other Attempts have been abroad.

I shall conclude this Exhortation in the Words of a renown'd Hero upon a like Occasion just before his Death. *Ye have seen all that the Lord your God hath done unto these Nations, because of you; for the Lord your God is he that hath fought for you.—Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve him in Sincerity and in Truth, and put away the Gods which your Fathers served on the other Side of the Flood, and in Egypt, and serve ye the Lord.* (Joshua xxiii. Ver. 3. and Chap. xxiv. 14.)

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